



# HUMAN TRAFFICKING & THE TEA INDUSTRY

## Tea Industry Facts

- Tea has become a major cash crop in the global economy.
- Large numbers of seasonal workers are hired but not legally registered.
- Tea bushes are generally grown and cultivated on large plantations, and cultivation requires labor intensive work such as prepping the land, transplanting seedlings, and using mulch, fertilizer, and pesticides.

## Where is Tea Produced?

- Major producers of tea are China, India, Kenya, Malawi, South Asia, and Latin America
- However, the US Department of Labor only found the use of forced labor and/or child labor in the tea industries in Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.
- According to the 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report, forced labor in tea plantations and tea shops occurs in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Eritrea, and Sri Lanka.
- The International Labor Rights Forum states that forced labor is also a problem in Indian tea plantations.
- In China, a majority of the tea comes from the Laogai penal camps.

## Types of Abuses

- Forced labor
- Debt bondage
- Nonpayment/wage theft
- Restrictions to movement
- Inconsistent benefits, including denial of education, medical attention, food, and water

## Regional Abuses

- Africa
  - Male migrant and seasonal labor represent the majority of workers.
  - Eritrean children are often subjected to forced labor in local tea shops.
- Asia
  - Children often help their parents pluck leaves.
  - Indian families are forced to work in the tea industry in Bangladesh.
  - Child tea workers in Tamil, Sri Lanka are subject to physical, sexual, and mental abuse.
- South America
  - The US Department of Labor reported child labor in the Brazilian tea industry in 2014

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- US Department of Labor; "2014 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor." [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)